

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall no. 128, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes 123, 124, 125, 126, 127 and 128.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" or "aye" on rollcall votes 124, 125, 126 and 127 and "no" or "nay" on rollcall votes 123 and 128.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1555, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

Mr. GOSS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-136) on the resolution (H. Res. 167) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1555) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER ON TOMORROW MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1141, 1999 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 7(c) of rule XXII, I hereby notify the House of my intention tomorrow to offer the following motion to instruct House conferees on H.R. 1141, the emergency supplemental appropriations bill.

The form of the motion is as follows:

Mr. UPTON Moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the 2 Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 1141 be instructed to insist that no provision—

- (1) not in H.R. 1141, when passed by the House,
 - (2) not in H.R. 1664 when passed by the House or directly related to H.R. 1664,
 - (3) not in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1141, as passed by the Senate,
- be agreed to by the managers on the part of the House.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as cosponsor of H.R. 3.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1141, 1999 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees on the bill (H.R. 1141) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. DEUTSCH moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill H.R. 1141 be instructed to insist on the funding level of \$621 million contained under the heading "Central America And The Caribbean Emergency Disaster Recovery Fund" of the House bill for necessary expenses to address the effects of hurricanes in Central America and the Caribbean and the earthquake in Colombia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Central America has been an American foreign policy success story, probably one of the great success stories in this country. We have actively supported or helped take countries from dictatorships to democracies, from conflict to peace, and from closed to opened economies.

But along the way in October a disaster occurred, a disaster which actually I was told today as a factual statement is actually the worst disaster in recorded history in the Western Hemisphere; an incredible historical statement to make, but a factual statement. That is the hurricane that devastated this area, Hurricane Mitch.

The devastation that occurred, the equivalent destruction, had it occurred in the United States of America, would have been 80,000 people dead, 25 million people made homeless. It is hard to conceive of what that would mean on a scale in our country, 25 million people homeless.

The issue of the hurricane was that it was not a localized damage, it was not a localized effect. The hurricane was over Honduras for 6 days. These are just incredible statistics, but accurately, I think, ascertained through AID sources.

In Honduras, 77 percent of the people in Honduras were directly affected by the hurricane, "directly affected" defined as either a family member died, was severely injured, was displaced in their home, lost their job, or their crop was lost, 77 percent of a country.

□ 1700

In Nicaragua, that number was 20 percent.

To give you a sense again just of the scope of the destruction, from 1961 to 1998, AID spent a total of \$298 million in the western hemisphere for aid in terms of natural disasters. That is from 1961 to 1998, during that entire period of time, a total of \$298 million. We have already spent, already expended, \$312 million in terms of Hurricane Mitch restoration efforts.

This is a region in the world which truly is our neighbor. It is also a huge trading partner, \$18 billion a year in U.S. exports, which is actually more than all of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe combined.

This House has passed previously funding, actually \$621 million in direct funding for reconstruction assistance. The House I think wisely actually increased this number above the Senate number, and this motion to recommit is to substantiate, to support the House position.

This funding is mostly through, really, AID in terms of projects like schools, health units, bridges, really infrastructure of the countries that were devastated by the storm.

If we do not do this, if we do not do this, what will occur? On a human level, what is already occurring is really the health issues, severe health issues of dysentery. Luckily, we were able to reprogram money, actually \$30 million, \$30 million of the 50 million additional dollars that this Congress appropriated for world children's health. We appropriated in the last Congress \$50 million for children's survival for the entire world. \$30 million of that \$50 million had wisely been spent to avoid a public health disaster in Central America. But that disaster can still occur.

So on a human level, we really are talking about health issues really in a sense whether we are going to do this or deal with increasing assistance or seeing starvation. But we are also dealing with a planting season which hopefully we will be able to do this supplemental and reach the time when the planting season will occur, which is before the start of the summer. So, on a human level, there are incredible human issues that we need to deal with.

But I would say to my colleagues that there are two direct issues. What we have seen previously is that this truly is our neighborhood, and these are our neighbors. Literally, our neighbors have the ability to walk to our homes, and we have seen this occur. If we give no hope to these people, I think what is overdetermined and what we know will happen is we will have another issue to deal with. It is an issue which I do not think this Congress directly wants to face, but it is an issue that will come to us.

On a second level, I think we need to remind ourselves, before the success stories, what was Central America. It was a place, from the changes we discussed, of dictatorships, of conflict, of war, and of closed economies. I can

think of nothing worse than us not supporting this funding than the action, the likely or the possible action that this could literally encourage that type of instability in that region.

There is a donors' conference that the administration has been very active in creating of many countries around the world that are pledging an additional over \$5 billion to the restoration efforts in Central America. If we do not participate, and this donors' conference is at the end of this month, if the United States does not take the lead in our commitment, we have already asked other countries around the world, France, Germany, England, Japan, the Scandinavian countries to come up with their participation, what will happen?

This is not something we support as a Congress; we support as a country to help in this region. But I think all of us know the reality is that if we do not help, no one will help. The accompanying disaster that we can foresee will be on our shoulders as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have a number of speakers who have asked on our side of the aisle to join this motion to instruct conferees, which is very timely and a very good idea, and I commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for it.

We have been working very diligently, Mr. Speaker, and will continue to do so on this project. I am hopeful, we are hopeful, that we will meet with success with regard to this very important foreign policy initiative, which, in addition to its importance to U.S. foreign policy, because our neighbors are our friends and we must not forget our best friends and neighbors, in addition to that, there is a very definite humanitarian aspect to what we are doing that calls us to make sure that this aid package is carried forth and included, the Central American aid, in the appropriations supplemental bill that is being at this time finalized.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), one of my distinguished friends, colleagues, and the chairman of the Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) for the leadership which he has shown on all of the issues pertaining to Central America.

I also want to congratulate another colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH), whose motion we are debating today. He is very attuned to the needs of our hemispheric neighbors and also on the impact that this has on our South Florida region. So I commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) for their leadership.

Mr. Speaker, over 6 months ago, our Central American neighbors were ravaged by Hurricane Mitch. The death and destruction of homes, of farms, entire communities were broadcast for the world to see: small children displaced from their homes, families divided, the entire livelihood of thousands washed away with the rains and the flood that followed the eye of the hurricane.

Our district, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) and my district in South Florida, has experienced the wrath of a hurricane. We know what that destruction is like.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew swept through our portion of the State, leaving behind a trail of destruction. Seven years later, we have recovered physically and economically. However, the emotional scars that are left long after the homes have been rebuilt have still not healed. The communities have been restored somewhat, but those difficulties remain.

But, Mr. Speaker, in Central America, these scars run even deeper, as thousands of lives were lost following what seemed to be endless days of floods and rains.

In Central America, the healing process has yet to begin. As Congress holds up these much-needed funds to provide regional fund and relief to the regions, families continue to go without shelter, to go without safe drinking water, and their children are going without education.

The bill before us would provide the necessary funds to help our neighbors begin to rebuild their infrastructures, their families, their economies, their communities.

Currently, our inability to reach an agreement on the relief package has significantly delayed the reconstruction of roads, schools, and health clinics; but we know that our leadership is working toward that final end that is going to be very positive. We congratulate them for their leadership on this issue.

But the more that we delay, Mr. Speaker, these are the things that will happen. USAID has said that the health situation in Honduras and Nicaragua in particular will continue to deteriorate because of a lack of medical resources and facilities to monitor and care for those who have been affected by the outbreaks of malaria, of cholera, of dengue, and other infectious diseases that have resulted following the hurricane.

Also, close to 200,000 children will continue to go without adequate schools, without their facilities, without their supplies. Food shortages will result as 100,000 small-scale farms will not receive credit and inputs for their first crops.

Let us not help to prolong the suffering of our hemispheric neighbors by continuing to not pass this critical funding package because the support of the revitalization of Central America

region will be helped by us voting in favor of this bill.

The Central American countries have been long-time allies of the United States. Notwithstanding the lamentable decisions of Guatemala and El Salvador to abstain from voting in the recent U.N. vote in Geneva, which correctly condemned the human rights violations in Cuba, these nations routinely stand with the U.S. in our battle in favor of freedom, of democracy in our hemisphere. Parenthetically, these countries could demonstrate their solidarity with the Cuban people by not participating in the November summit in Havana.

But Central America has survived revolutions. They have survived natural disasters to become symbols of democracy in our hemisphere. Let us help them to further solidify their freedom-loving institutions by aiding them with these much-needed funds.

They are our hemispheric neighbors, and we need to help them get back on their feet. This is not a bailout. It is a helping hand. Let us not turn our backs on Central America now. They need us. We will be there for them.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) who has been active on this issue, has traveled with the President to Central America.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for yielding me this time and also for making that trip as well to Central America to view some of the destruction that had gone on.

The people of Kosovo and the people of Central America have one important element in common, their lives have been uprooted and disrupted due to forces outside of their control. Because of this, their destinies in many ways are no longer in their own hands.

For these reasons, we have had to step into Kosovo to help people that are no longer able to defend themselves. In March, 2 months ago, when we voted to help the victims of one of the worst natural disasters in the recorded history of this hemisphere, we made a similar commitment in Central America, one we are duty bound to fulfill now.

There is no reason why we should treat the victims of a man-made disaster any different than we would treat those who are victims of a natural disaster. The supplemental funding for Kosovo that the House passed last week included \$566 million in humanitarian aid for refugees from Kosovo.

Yet, the Congress is still saying that it needs offsets to provide the assistance to the Central American countries that have more than a million refugees waiting for that humanitarian assistance that the President said would be forthcoming at the end of last year and that this Congress in March said it would send as well.

In Kosovo, we see some 700,000 refugees, people who have been displaced, uprooted from their homes. Hurricane

Mitch, when it hit Central America at the end of October, cost the lives of at least 9,000 people. There are still some 9,000 to 10,000 Central Americans who are missing and at this point now, after 6 months, are presumed dead. Over 1 million people, about 1.3 million people were displaced. Some 1 million still remain homeless in Central America.

Clearly, the situations in both Kosovo and Central America are humanitarian emergencies. Both should be funded in the same way, without cuts in critical and domestic foreign international programs that this government funds.

□ 1715

We need to keep in mind the magnitude of destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch. What would we all think if we were to hear that the entire States of Texas and New Jersey had just been left homeless; that the entire populations of those two States or that the entire population of Orlando, Florida, or Dayton, Ohio was either dead or missing and now presumed dead? In the United States that would be considered a disaster of catastrophic proportions. This is the equivalent of what happened in Central America given the relative size of those countries this past year.

The cost in Central America is not just human. It is estimated that 40 percent of the infrastructure and 60 percent of the roads were destroyed by the hurricane. Some think it will take 25 to 50 years for Central America to recover, to get back to where it was. And as it was, it was already one of the poorest regions in the world.

NATO is involved in a crisis in Kosovo because we understand the fate of Europe is intertwined with the fate of the Balkans. We in this hemisphere need to understand that our fate is intertwined with that of our neighbors in the Americas as well. I urge my colleagues to vote for this motion sponsored by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER), one of the few Members of our House who has, through the years, assisted more, given more of his time and his efforts to help the people throughout Central America.

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I appreciate the time to speak today in support of the full funding levels for Central America and the Caribbean emergencies, part of the supplemental bill that is currently being negotiated between the House and Senate conferees.

As we all know, H.R. 1141 passed the House over a month ago. But, unfortunately, no money has been released to assist the devastated countries in Central America because Congress has yet to approve the supplemental. It is really disgraceful.

I was able to visit Honduras just 2 weeks after Hurricane Mitch wreaked

its havoc, and also Armenia, Colombia, after the earthquake, a town of 300,000 that was devastated. I do not know about the rest of my colleagues, but I thought Armenia was a small town until I visited it. Stop and think of a town of 300,000 in our country where half the whole town is just wiped away. It is unbelievable.

In Honduras alone, 25,000 people lost their jobs in the banana fields, because not only was the banana crop destroyed but the plants that grow the bananas were washed away, the topsoil was washed away, and there is now just a bunch of sand there. It will be at least 3 years before they can ever start really growing banana crops again. Over a million people lost their homes and at least 7,000 people lost their lives.

Luckily, through donations from various and sundry steel manufacturers and Rotary International, I was able to provide 100 tons of galvanized steel to supply roofing for housing in Honduras. These houses are 20 by 20, on a concrete slab. A concrete block, two windows and a door. No plumbing, no nothing, just a roof. And this steel was for that. One hundred tons of steel will roughly supply roofs for 1500 houses. That is roughly speaking 1 percent of the need they have down there.

Now, if my colleagues can believe it, AID is running out of money. AID is running out of money to build the houses. We have the roof now, but we cannot continue without some money for AID to help us build the houses.

I believe that now rather than later is the time for the United States to come to the aid of our neighbors to the south. Too much time has been wasted in negotiation. We simply need to release the funding by passing a clean supplemental. And I mean clean. This will ensure struggling nations that the United States is willing and ready to help.

In the month that the U.S. Government has been inactive in sending relief funding to these disaster areas just miles from our borders, other countries from all over the world, not as rich and not as close in proximity to Central America, have sent money, supplies, aid and their nation's support. It is time for the United States to stop playing political games, step up to the plate and assist our disadvantaged neighbors to the south.

I urge my colleagues to support full funding for the relief aid to the countries of Central America.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for yielding me this time and also for his very hard and diligent work on this issue.

It is very important that we pass this motion to instruct conferees on 1141 because we have got to help the victims of this massive hurricane so they can be relieved of some of the harsh misery

they have experienced in Central America.

The supplemental appropriation of \$621 million is badly needed to restore the vital infrastructure and to meet public health emergencies. In addition to responding to humanitarian needs, this infusion of emergency funds will also help to revive weakened economies by allowing more goods to flow and more jobs to be created.

Hurricane Mitch occurred over 6 months ago, but people displaced by Hurricane Mitch are still in unhealthy camps and in shelters and they must be relocated to housing, and housing must be built. There must be a return to social and economic viability and normalcy.

I am especially sensitive and aware of the dislocation and trauma associated with disasters. My district has experienced fires and earthquakes, and our recovery efforts have actually required a large commitment, much compassion and many resources from the Federal Government.

We must keep our commitment to hemispheric stability and fulfill the expressions of concern and sympathy that we made in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. These promises are worthless if we do not give this basic assistance when needed. Our neighbors in Central America need this assistance, and they need it now.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time remains on this side of the aisle?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) has 20½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am in full agreement with all that has been said by each and every one of my distinguished colleagues who have risen in support of the need for us to insist upon the House position that aid to Central America be provided forthwith.

It would be a grave foreign policy mistake for the United States, while taking care of undoubted needs that we have with regard to the operation in Kosovo, and there is no doubt that it is absolutely indispensable that our men and women in uniform not be further abandoned and that every assistance must be provided to our Armed Forces due to the operation that has been going on now for almost 2 months in Kosovo, and while we do that, our eyes are focused upon Europe in a most humane way and necessary way, but it would be a mistake if we forgot to look at and if we forgot the importance of our closest friends and neighbors in their hour of need.

Central America was hit in a devastating way by the natural disaster known as Hurricane Mitch. The United States made a commitment to Central America, rooted in humanitarian reasons, that we would go to the aid of our

friends and neighbors in Central America. It is necessary, therefore, not only for humanitarian reasons but because of the foreign policy interests of the United States, that we not ignore this hemisphere. A wrong message would be going out to our friends and neighbors in this hemisphere if at the time that we address concerns in Europe that we fail to address even the most elemental and needed of concerns here in this hemisphere in Central America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank publicly the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), for his leadership on this issue. He has reiterated his support of what we are advocating this evening. I also would like to especially thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, who has committed, along with the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CALLAHAN), of the appropriation subcommittee, who have also publicly and privately committed to making sure that this issue is resolved as soon as possible. They are demonstrating leadership, they are demonstrating their concern, they are demonstrating their compassion and their understanding not only of the humanitarian interests involved in this issue but also the foreign policy concerns of the United States that are involved in this matter.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that we will soon be seeing, even in this package that is being negotiated right now, fundamentally rooted toward the needs in Europe as a consequence of the operation in Kosovo, in that same appropriations vehicle, I am fully confident that we will see the issue that we are addressing this evening fully addressed.

But, again, I commend my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH), who has been very persevering and demonstrated great interest and leadership on this issue for bringing forth the motion to instruct, which I think is an appropriate reminder that many of us in this Congress feel very strongly about this issue.

Honduras was destroyed by Mitch, Salvador was hit very hard, as was Guatemala and as was Nicaragua. Fortunately, Costa Rica was not hit hard and Panama was not as well. But so many of our friends and neighbors were hit directly by this tragedy that we must in this hour of need remember them.

I think it is important we take this opportunity to remind the people of those countries and their governments that we do not forget them; that we continue to work for what is essentially in the national interest of the United States and also very much a humanitarian necessity; that we extend our hand of assistance to our neighbors.

I also want to address an issue that my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) touched on that I think is very important. We are very grateful to the Central American countries for their consistent support

of United States foreign policy on so many issues through the years.

As the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) pointed out, Central America, in this hemisphere, is somewhere that we can point to as an obvious and genuine success story. Central America was challenged by wars and by dictatorships and by totalitarian aggression just a decade ago, and the success story is there for all of us to see. There are democracies in all of those countries. They need our help, they need our support, they need our solidarity, and in this hour of need they need this very concrete assistance that we will be sending them.

We were disappointed, as the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) stated, with the vote of just a few days ago by Guatemala and El Salvador with regard specifically to the resolution that was introduced by the Czech Republic in the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

□ 1730

It was a very appropriate and very necessary and very human resolution at this time, calling upon the international community to recall, to take note of, and to express its concern for the human rights violations in Cuba for the political prisoners, for the fact that the four best-known political prisoners in Cuba were now re-sentenced, in effect, to long prison terms for publishing a document calling for free elections.

That resolution, filed at the United Nations Human Rights Commission by the Government of President Havel of the Czech Republic, cosponsored by the Polish Government, succeeded, it passed, but only by one vote.

And it was very disappointing to see the Government of Guatemala and the Government of El Salvador abstain in something that broke tradition with them. It certainly broke with the spirit of solidarity toward a neighboring people in this hemisphere that have been suffering a dictatorship for 40 years.

And so, while I express my disappointment, very strong disappointment, I ask President Flores of Honduras and President-Elect Flores, a young statesman who I have not had the pleasure of meeting personally but I have seen him and read of him and he is most impressive, President-Elect Flores of El Salvador, as well as President Arzu of Guatemala and President Rodriguez of Costa Rica and all of our neighbors who are part of the so-called Ibero-American Summit, to please think about what it means to attend a summit at a place, at a country, that has been suffering a dictatorship for 40 years, a totalitarian dictatorship that has increased its repression in the last 6 months, flaunting its intention not to permit any sort of political opening even after a visit by His Holiness the Pope.

And so, I would ask the presidents of Honduras and of all our neighbors of El Salvador and Guatemala to follow the

example already set by President Aleman of Nicaragua, who very courageously has stated that he will not attend that summit because it will take place at a place where there has been a 40-year-old dictatorship.

And I ask then that our other neighbors follow the example of President Aleman and his courage and his statesmanship and also to follow the example of President Rodriguez of Costa Rica, who has not made a decision on whether to attend or not but has been very forthright and very public in his condemnation of the human rights situation being suffered by the Cuban people.

Now, of course, this matter should demonstrate, despite my disappointment and the disappointment of a number of us here in Congress on this issue, the fact that we are pushing as resolutely and as intensely for this aid package to Central America that shows, number one, that we know that, over and above decisions of governments, the interests of people are even more important, in this case the suffering people of Central America, and that we also hope that the governments of friendly nations, such as the ones that we have mentioned, will utilize this upcoming opportunity to reconsider their attendance at a summit such as the one that we have made reference to.

And so, I join all of my colleagues again in reiterating the need that this aid to Central America be included in the appropriations vehicle that is now being negotiated and again commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for bringing forth this motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of the time.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RODRIGUEZ), who has been a leader on issues regarding Central America and has been very sensitive and very effective in making sure that that part of the region of the world continues to receive our partnership with the United States.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, let me, first of all, congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) on his efforts; and I want to thank him for taking this lead. And I want to also congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) on his efforts also.

As we debate this motion and this motion to support and ask the conferees to consider the disaster aid, we look at the fact that there are tens of thousands of Central Americans that still face each day this disaster.

The numbers are striking. Over 9,000 dead. Over 9,000 missing. Over 3 million displaced individuals from their homes. Death and injury continues some 6 months after the deadly hurricane has hit.

I think we need to recognize, if we look at our infrastructure in our own country, we realize that in countries

such as Honduras, one of the poorest countries in Central America, has been hit and they do not even have the infrastructure now so they are having to deal with dysentery and a whole bunch of other problems. Even now, inadequate supplies of clean drinking water and damaged infrastructure help spread disease among the population.

The administration has acted quickly to provide some \$300 million in emergency assistance. But more is clearly needed, and this additional assistance is far overdue. Congress has not risen to the challenge. We have allowed politics to stand in the way of providing the disaster aid that our neighbors in Central America desperately need.

And let me remind my colleagues that there are neighbors and there are neighbors, and we have a moral obligation and a responsibility. Their suffering is our suffering. But if moral duty is not enough, we also have a self-interest reason for helping. The continued loss of life and economic desperation will only encourage more migration from this region in Central America to the United States.

Our borders are already seeing great numbers of Central Americans trying to enter, and the numbers will swell if we do not act quickly. The money we seek today will provide basic infrastructure: roads, schools, and clinics. It is a helping hand to those who suffer from natural disaster. It gives them the tools to rebuild and move forward. Let us stop wasting the time and let us move forward.

Even countries such as Costa Rica who were not directly hit have been impacted by the number of refugees that have gone over. We had over 300,000 that have gone into that country. That is equivalent to over 25 million refugees that would come into this country by just the numbers that we are referring to.

At this point, I would ask that we seriously consider that and move forward. And, again, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for his efforts.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) who, as a freshman Member, has shown real leadership on all sorts of issues but including our concern on foreign policy issues in this hemisphere.

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 1141 offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

This motion would instruct the conferees to insist on the full funding level of \$621 million for the Central American and Caribbean Emergency Disaster Recovery Fund, as passed in the House version.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable that the majority of this House has continued to delay efforts to provide

emergency hurricane disaster relief to Central America and the Caribbean and emergency earthquake assistance to Colombia by playing partisan politics.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen firsthand the devastation and suffering in Colombia, where a January earthquake left thousands dead and thousands more without shelter, running water, electricity, medicine, and clothing. The resources provided in this legislation are critical to our ability to continue our humanitarian activities and to provide much-needed relief for those coping with these disasters.

Clearly, we must not delay efforts that can greatly alleviate the devastating impact that this disaster has had on these countries. And I would point out that I agree with the comments of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) earlier about the fact that if we do nothing about these disasters, these disasters will not walk away, they will simply walk to the north and to our country.

Mr. Speaker, as the human suffering from these disasters continues, we must not allow the partisanship to hamper our ability to provide for those in need. Now is the time to act, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this motion.

Just one other point. This is not helping our situation in terms of the drug war in Colombia, as well. We are giving fodder to drug lords who are taking advantage of people who are in a desperate situation. And desperate times calls for desperate measures. And, unfortunately, we are hearing stories of more and more individual men and women being used as mules to transport illicit drugs to this country. And it is another additional example of the terrible blow that this hurricane and this earthquake have plagued upon the people of South America and Colombia.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), who also has actually witnessed firsthand some of the devastation in Central America on more than one occasion with the President as well as additional trips down there.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me the time; and I congratulate both my colleagues for leading this effort on behalf of Central America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion to instruct the conferees on H.R. 1141, the supplemental appropriations bill, which will provide critical assistance for Central America.

This motion to instruct conferees is important because it reflects our need to act now and to provide full funding of \$621 million in disaster assistance for Central America. Already 6 months have passed since Hurricane Mitch. Every day that we delay is another day of suffering for our neighbors in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

During my recent visit to the area with President Clinton, I saw firsthand

the terrible, terrible devastation. Entire roads and villages were literally washed away. Millions of people were merely surviving, lacking adequate shelter, food, and water. Their livelihoods have been completely destroyed, and they are suffering from inadequate health care.

The situation is growing worse, and I can tell my colleagues that our failure to act is simply inexcusable.

Mr. Speaker, we must act now to stop the partisan wrangling and push forward this assistance. Conditions there remain bleak; and, with the upcoming rainy season, things will only get dramatically worse. The \$621 million in the supplemental will allow for the critical repair and reconstruction of roads, bridges, and schools. Moreover, critical health care and prevention resources will, hopefully, avert a looming epidemic of diseases such as malaria, cholera, dengue fever, and other killer diseases.

Finally, this aid will begin the process of resurrecting the agriculture economies of these nations, providing hope and restoration of these people's lives and an orderliness in their countries.

This is a matter of humanitarian assistance that should not be held up by political posturing. Our Nation can and should take decisive action immediately to alleviate the misery that is now occurring in Central America. This is simply the right thing to do, and it is long overdue for action from this House.

I ask this House to send a strong message that help is on the way and that help will provide and eliminate the suffering in Central America.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, urge this House to vote in favor of H.R. 1141.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) has 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER), whose district borders Mexico and who understands the implications of this issue probably as well as anyone in this House.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his efforts.

We are in Europe today, in Kosovo, because of humanitarian concerns for the people of Kosovo. Surely, we should have some humanitarian concerns for those people who live in our hemisphere who 6 months ago were subject to one of the greatest disasters in our recorded history.

Let us be humanitarian in our hemisphere, as well. Let us pass this motion to instruct on the emergency supplemental, which will give money to our hemisphere in order to do what we must do now.

If we do not do it now, our Central American neighbors will lose hope.

They move backwards from the progress they have made in political and economic stability. Their infrastructure repairs will be delayed. Displaced persons will remain stranded. School construction refurbishment will be stalled.

It is time to be a humanitarian in the western hemisphere. Please support this motion to instruct.

□ 1745

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

(Mr. Faleomavaega asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to certainly endorse and second the efforts made by our good friends the gentlemen from Florida for their efforts in gaining support from the Members to secure the \$621 million that is critically needed for the people in Central America. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that years ago we had a very basic fundamental foreign policy. It was called the Monroe Doctrine. We tell other nations in the world, "Don't tread on the Western Hemisphere because we'll take care of the people in the Western Hemisphere."

So what happens now is that we are going to Europe, having this crisis in Kosovo, and all of a sudden we seem to be readily available to provide the funding for the people in Kosovo, which I am not taking anything away from the fact that some 800,000 people, refugees, have become as a result of the crisis in Kosovo. But we have completely forgotten that there was a hurricane called Mitch that severely affected the lives of some 7 million people in Central America, 1 million people directly affected. Some 7 million people, as I am told, have no drinkable water.

All this piece of legislation proposes is that the Congress do the right thing. We need the money, it should be brought out, and this institution should support the \$621 million for the good of our friends and neighbors in the Western Hemisphere, those who live in Central America.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the vice chairman of the Democratic Caucus and a leader in the foreign policy area in the entire Congress.

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by thanking the distinguished gentleman from Florida for bringing this motion to instruct the conferees. I think it is necessary and it is fitting and it is appropriate to do so, and I really regret that he finds himself as we find ourselves in the necessity of having to instruct conferees and that in fact conferees are finally meeting on this when they should have been meeting quite a long time ago and

when in fact those conferees should have been appointed quite a while ago. Now, on the issue at hand, the fact of the matter is, is that it is in the national interest of the United States to assist the Central American countries as it relates to this disaster assistance. I am not speaking about humanitarian purposes, which in and of itself would be more than enough reason to be of assistance as a good neighbor. No, I am talking about interests that are far more significant. I would like to tell our colleagues what some of those are.

The fact of the matter is, is that when you have 1 million people in Central America who in fact have no place to call home, because I walked after the hurricane on what in essence were the rooftops, now caked in mud from the landslides and the mud slides that took place after the hurricane, on the rooftops of what were people's homes, some of the greatest cultivated fields for production of food and agricultural products now caked over in mud. When you have 1 million people who have no place to call home, when you have 1 million people who have no place to be gainfully employed for their families, in essence when you have no hope, then ultimately it seems to me that what we find ourselves in is a situation in which they will seek to go to a place in which there might be some hope and that means coming northward, and that means illegal immigration, something that has been a great topic in this body.

We would prefer to see those million people continue to reside in their homeland, continue to try to rebuild their homes and their lives and their countries and not come northward. So we have a national interest in terms of stemming the tide of those people coming, we have a national interest in the disease that is generated by a million people being exposed to the elements, in tuberculosis, in other diseases, not coming northward to the United States and in trying to help the people with their health consequences. We have a national interest in trying to ensure that drug trafficking does not now take a foothold in Central America, which for the most part it has not had in Central America. But if you have a million people who have no other form of employment, ultimately the drug traffickers can try to elicit them to be mules, to try to engage them in the trafficking, they can try to move into territorial areas. That is of course of great consequence. And we also have the fact that we spent billions in Central America to try to promote democracy. Finally, when we have those countries moving in the democratic movement forward, what are we going to do, have them destabilized because of a natural hurricane? And we find it offensive that the majority insists on having offsets on this issue, the \$625 million, when they have no offsets on over \$13 billion, 6 to \$7 billion more than the President requested for Kosovo, yet for that there are no off-

sets. But to help our Central American neighbors in which we have all of these national interests at stake, there must be offsets.

What are we telling the community in this country? What are we telling Americans of Hispanic descent? We have a two-tiered process here. It is simply unfair, unjust, unconscionable. We need to help these people now. The rainy season is coming upon us. We need this money in this supplemental. We should not be debating about offsets at a time when you care about no other offsets. It is time to move forward now and to preserve our national interests and to help our Central American neighbors because it is not only in our interest but it is also in their interest to do so.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I was in total agreement with everything that was said until my last distinguished colleague spoke. I think that it is most unfortunate that this be utilized for partisan purposes, this topic, because if there is one topic that should not be utilized for partisan purposes, it is a disaster. When we had a disaster in the Midwest not long ago, in order to comply with the budget agreement signed by the Congress and the White House, there were offsets. At this point there is debate in the conference committee with regard to how much and in order to comply with the budget agreement entered into between the Congress and the White House, there may be the need to offset. What that means is that other programs, future spending may be looked at in order to comply with an agreement between the House, the Senate and the White House. But I do not want to get further into that.

What I want to say is what there is consensus on is what we have heard for the most part this evening, and that is the need to help our friends and neighbors in Central America and, secondly, that we will help our friends and neighbors in Central America and that there is a commitment from the Speaker of the House and the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the Committee on Appropriations to accomplish this in the vehicle that is being negotiated right as we speak, the supplemental appropriations legislation, which is commonly known as the Kosovo supplemental appropriations, because of the fact the Kosovo conflict has gone on for as long as it has gone on and there are dire needs that our military have, extraordinary needs that our Armed Forces have as a consequence of that operation that must be taken care of immediately, that must be addressed forthwith.

I am glad that there is consensus, that we will be moving forward on this issue, that there is the commitment that exists from our leadership rooted in the national interest of the United States as well as in humanitarian

grounds to resolve this issue forthwith. I am grateful to our leadership for committing to resolve this issue, and I will continue working with all intensity to do everything I can so that the issue of our assistance that we have committed to our friends and neighbors in Central America that we will be providing is in fact provided.

I would again reiterate my gratitude to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH) for bringing forth this motion to instruct, which has given us the opportunity to focus upon an issue of consensus, the need to help our neighbors and our friends in Central America.

I would simply remind our friends and neighbors in Central America, distinguished friends, I think they know who their best friends are as we know who our best friends are. I remind the President of El Salvador and the President of Guatemala that they did not act a few weeks ago as our best friends when they abstained on a motion, a resolution introduced by the government of President Havel of the Czech Republic to remember the only people in this hemisphere, our neighbors as well, the only people who remained in effect bound and gagged and oppressed for 40 years. That was a most unfortunate vote by Guatemala and by El Salvador which deeply disappointed us, but as we stated before, we are hopeful that as that summit approaches in November the ethical conduct, the ethical path will be embarked upon.

Again I thank the gentleman from Florida. This House is united on this issue. We have a leadership that I believe is united on this issue. I know the gentleman has been extremely interested and has exerted great leadership on it. It has been my privilege to work with him, and it will be my privilege to continue working with him to see it through and to make certain that this aid which we have committed to our neighbors and our friends will forthwith in fact be provided.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I too want to congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), who really has shown an incredible amount of leadership and ability on this issue. We really have been a team effort and this really has been a bipartisan effort by a number of Members in this Congress to really explain to our colleagues the importance of this issue, that this is really clearly in America's national interest and our financial interest and in our moral interest to support and make sure this bill occurs.

I actually look forward to the day when our roles are reversed and I am in the majority helping on these types of issues and my good friend and colleague from Florida is in the minority helping us on these issues and each of us will have a chance to replay some of these thoughts. But really in closing, I guess I would just reiterate what my colleagues have said over the last hour

or so, but I will mention one specific thing.

As has been mentioned, I had the opportunity to view some of the devastation. Words truly cannot describe the level of devastation. I mentioned some things in my opening statement, statistics, facts, historical analogies of what has occurred, and they are significant. It is hard to comprehend the pictures on television of the devastation that really did not match in any way in numbers of thousands killed or millions displaced. They do not, I think, give us that sense. We attempt to use those numbers to try to explain to us, but witnessing mud slides that literally wiped out entire villages, there is not a trace, not a building, not a street at all, where literally thousands of people are buried under 40 feet of mud is an incredible sight, the devastation that has occurred. That is really the component, the sort of humanitarian component to show what the United States must do to lend a hand, that we need to, that we did not choose to be in this situation but we are in that situation. If we do not help, the reality is no one will. These economies are not in a position to rebuild on their own in any short period of time.

□ 1800

The number has been mentioned, 25 years. That is not an unfair or unlikely scenario.

Finally in closing, as I mentioned, this really is in our interest. This has been a success story in terms of American foreign policy. As my colleague from Florida has mentioned, we have, unfortunately, only one country in our hemisphere that has not taken the road to democracy and open economies, and hopefully relatively soon that will change as well. But to continue that record we are going to need to pass this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of the motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR CONTINUED OPERATIONS OF U.S. FORCES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and the

Committee on Armed Services, and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 1203 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 1999, Public Law 105-261 (the Act), requires submission of a report to the Congress whenever the President submits a request for funds for continued operations of U.S. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In connection with my Administration's request for funds for FY 2000, the attached report fulfills the requirements of section 1203 of the Act.

I want to emphasize again my continued commitment to close consultation with the Congress on political and military matters concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congress in the months ahead as we work to establish a lasting peace in the Balkans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, May 12, 1999.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HILL of Montana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

McCAFFREY COVERS UP CASTRO'S PARTICIPATION IN DRUG TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.